

Nov 8th, 12:00 AM

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Yang, Jung-ha and Chen-Yu, Jessie, "Consumer Characteristics and Purchase Intentions of Mass-customized Men's Dress Shirts" (2016). *International Textile and Apparel Association (ITAA) Annual Conference Proceedings*. 94.  
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## Consumer Characteristics and Purchase Intentions of Mass-customized Men's Dress Shirts

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Keywords: Mass-customization, menswear, attitude, intentions

**Significance of the study and theoretical framework.** Mass-customization (MC) is a hybrid between mass production and customization. It is a production strategy that offers personalized goods through modularized product designs, flexible processes, and supply chain integration (Fogliatto, da Silveira & Borenstein, 2012). Previous apparel MC studies explored the dimensions of MC specific to apparel product category (Yang, Kincade, & Chen-Yu, 2015) and examined related consumer behaviors such as the acceptance of apparel MC (Lee, Kunz, Fiore & Campbell, 2002) and perceived risks (Lee & Moon, 2015). However, there is a lack of research that examines consumer characteristics related to the adoption of apparel MC of specific product categories. Information in characteristics of potential customers is important for companies that offer MC apparel to develop effective strategies to reach and serve their target customers. In addition, men's consumer behaviors have been under-represented in the realm of apparel studies, despite its high annual growth rate of 17.4% in the online menswear sales (Bain, 2015).

Given the above gaps in the literature, we developed a theoretical framework to examine consumers' characteristics and their purchase intentions of MC men's dress shirts based on the Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) and related previous study results (e.g., Knight & Kim, 2007; Pisut & Connell, 2007). We proposed five hypotheses. H1: Consumers' characteristics (i.e., uniqueness seeking, fit seeking, sale seeking, fashion innovativeness) predict their perceived usefulness of MC for men's dress shirts; H2: Consumers' facilitating conditions (i.e., time availability, money availability) predict self-efficacy in using MC for men's dress shirts; H3: Self-efficacy in using MC predicts perceived usefulness of MC for men's dress shirts; H4: Self-efficacy in using MC predicts purchase intentions of MC men's dress shirts; H5: Perceived usefulness of MC predicts purchase intentions of MC men's dress shirts.

**Method.** We employed a quantitative research method using an online survey design. A questionnaire was developed and pilot tested to measure all variables in the study. To avoid the possibility that some respondents were not familiar with the concept of apparel MC, we included detailed explanations and pictorial aids of how men's dress shirt MC can be done in the survey. Our sample of 474 respondents was acquired through a national market research company. To increase the applicability of the research to consumers who purchase and wear dress shirts, the subjects were restricted to male consumers in sales and office occupations, or management, professional, and related occupations.

**Results & Implications.** We performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the construct validity of the measurement model, resulting in an acceptable model fit (CFI=.98, GFI=.92, AGFI=.90, NFI=.95, RMSEA=.04), and we also verified the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measurement model. The structural equation modeling with maximum likelihood estimation was conducted to test the hypotheses. The fit indexes indicated

that the hypothesized model fit the data well (CFI=.98, IFI=.98, NFI=.95, and RMSEA=.04). The results supported all proposed hypotheses; except H1 was partially supported. Uniqueness seeking ( $\beta=.13, p<.05$ ), fit seeking ( $\beta=.10, p<.05$ ), and fashion innovativeness ( $\beta=.12, p<.05$ ) predicted perceive usefulness of MC, while sale seeking did not. Male consumers who seek uniqueness, customized fit, and fashion-forwardness perceive MC of dress shirts as being useful. Time availability ( $\beta=.67, p<.001$ ) and money availability ( $\beta=.10, p<.05$ ) predicted the self-efficacy in using dress shirt MC. Male consumers who perceive that they have the time to engage in the MC process and have the money to pay for a premium of MC dress shirt have the confidence in using the MC. Self-efficacy was the predictor of the perceived usefulness of MC ( $\beta=.55, p<.001$ ), which means that consumers who felt confident in using apparel MC perceived apparel MC as being useful. Both self efficacy a ( $\beta=.22, p<.001$ ) and perceived usefulness ( $\beta=.63, p<.001$ ) predicted the purchase intention. Male consumers who perceive apparel MC as being more useful and feel more confident in using MC have a higher intention of purchasing MC dress shirts, compared to those who did not.

This study examined male consumer behaviors regarding apparel mass-customization specific to the category of men's dress shirts. It contributed to filling the gaps in the literature, and the results of this study provides bases for developing effective merchandising strategies in men's wear MC. For example, menswear companies that offer MC dress shirts may want to select male consumers who seek uniqueness, want better fit, or have a desire to express fashion in dress shirts as their target segment. They may design the MC process easy enough for the customers so that they feel confident in using MC. In addition, the company can develop promotional strategies (e.g., using testimonials or encouraging reviews of existing customers) to help the potential customers recognize that MC dress shirts are useful to obtain a dress shirt that they exactly desire.

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